



2015 Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund – Nonpoint Source Request for Applications (RFA) (Revised January 11, 2016)

Source of Funding: State Water Quality Improvement Fund

Issued By:

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RFA and Grant Awards Timeline:

November 19, 2015	Issue request for proposals
February 16, 2016	Deadline for submitting applications and proposals
April 15, 2016	Target date for WQIF award decisions and public posting
July 1, 2016	Target date to begin executing WQIF project agreements
June 30, 2018	Target completion date for all project awards

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A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

As authorized in [the Code of Virginia, Water Quality Improvement Act \(WQIA\)](#) and through the [Water Quality Improvement Fund Guidelines \(WQIF Guidelines\)](#), the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is making \$2.5 million in grant funding available to support projects and local programs that will result in nonpoint source (NPS) pollution reductions. This Request for Applications (RFA) is targeted at non-agricultural projects that help meet local and Chesapeake Bay water quality goals. Projects with the highest NPS reductions compared to the dollars requested will be given priority.

Funding is available, statewide, for projects that reduce NPS pollution from stormwater runoff, failing onsite sewage disposal systems, abandoned or orphaned mine lands, or other non-agricultural sources of NPS pollution. Statewide, projects that reduce pollution contributing to water quality impairments are a funding priority. Within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, projects that maximize reduction of nitrogen, phosphorus or sediment are a funding priority. Agricultural sources of NPS pollution are targeted through other funding assistance programs such as the [Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program](#).

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Regional and local government applicants, such as cities, counties, towns, soil and water conservation districts, and planning district commissions along with state agencies are eligible for NPS WQIF funding to be awarded through this RFA. **Applicants must be willing and capable to receive a grant on a cost-reimbursement basis; upfront advances will not be available.**

C. PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECT READINESS

Applicants should demonstrate that appropriate partnerships are in place or can be established to assure successful implementation of the project. If an appropriate local partnership does not already exist, projects should include a strategy to identify and engage essential partners. Letters documenting the support/contributions of project partners are strongly encouraged.

Similarly, applicants should identify stakeholders who have the potential to deter or help the successful completion and maintenance of the project. Projects should include a strategy for engaging key stakeholders.

Proposals should also demonstrate that the project will engage appropriate technical expertise and assistance throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure projects are technically sound and feasible. Project progress should be continually assessed to identify and address new challenges and opportunities as they arise. If successful, applicants will be required to document that the project expects to receive, or has received, all necessary permits and permissions to comply with any federal, state or local laws or ordinances.

It is important that grant recipients proceed quickly with their proposed projects. Applications should demonstrate that applicants can proceed immediately with their proposed projects, or demonstrate an advanced state of readiness.

D. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

In accord with WQIF Guidelines, DEQ will provide funding through this RFA to support NPS water quality initiatives for pollution reduction along with cooperative NPS pollution reduction projects that address local water quality problems.

Proposals should demonstrate significant, measurable project outputs and outcomes and **to be eligible for funding, projects must reduce NPS pollution**. Pollution reduction quantifications will be completed by DEQ staff; therefore, details regarding numbers and types of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and area treated **must be included in the application**. Attachment 3 includes a spreadsheet with required information. Other types of outcomes such as educational programs that will be delivered should also be identified. Implementation projects should include project designs and maps, and must have plans for long-term maintenance.

Eligible nonpoint source pollution reduction projects and activities are identified below. **Projects must target only one category or subcategory**. Proposals must provide information required to calculate on pollution reduction estimates for the target pollutant for the category selected. While the list below is not intended to be prescriptive, it is intended to illustrate the types of projects that would be eligible for funding through this RFA. Education activities are eligible in concert with water quality improvement initiatives that reduce NPS pollution.

Category 1 – Urban and Suburban Stormwater Management and Low Impact Development

Proposed designs must meet the standards and specifications established in the Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook or those available on the Virginia Stormwater BMP Clearinghouse (<http://www.vwrrc.vt.edu/swc/>) and include a DEQ approved operation, maintenance and landowner agreement with schedule. Target Pollutant: Pounds of Total Phosphorous reduced. *NPS results – type of BMP, estimated size of BMP area, BMP treatment area, drainage area, etc.*

- a) **Green Infrastructure and retrofitting existing impervious surfaces**: Retrofit developed properties and impervious surfaces to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff by reducing runoff volumes and peak flows through utilization of the natural retention and absorption capabilities of vegetation and soils. Retrofit with infiltration and bio-filtration BMP's. Examples of potentially eligible activities include: installation of green roofs, riparian buffers, planter boxes, rain gardens, grass swales, filter strips, infiltration and bio-retention practices, vegetative swales and pocket wetlands; the conversion of impervious pavement and concrete to pervious surfaces using such items as pervious pavement and permeable pavers. Utilize the above techniques to retrofit existing developed sites by removing or slotting curbs along the edge of parking lots and roads, routing runoff from paved areas across vegetated or forested filters.
- b) **Retrofits to manage rooftop runoff and downspout disconnection**: Retrofit existing roof drains by disconnecting them from the storm drainage system or from discharging across an impervious surface and redirecting the runoff into a pervious surface or into a storage system such as a cistern for rainwater reuse. Retrofits to manage rooftop runoff for large commercial or institutional sites where roof runoff is re-directed to a pervious surface, filtration or infiltration stormwater BMP, bio-retention facility and/or a rainwater-harvesting system. Development and implementation of a program to disconnect residential roof drains from the storm drain system or impervious surface through cost share and/or ordinance development.

Category 2 – Failing Onsite Sewage Disposal Programs

This type of project will address straight pipes and failed or failing onsite sewage disposal systems through repair and replacement, pump out and maintenance or sewerage system connection. All practices must follow the residential septic system BMP specifications outlined in DEQ's Virginia TMDL [Implementation Cost Share Residential and Agricultural BMP Guidelines](#) except for the construction of cluster wastewater systems. Target Pollutants: Pounds of Total Nitrogen and % of Bacteria/Pathogens reduced.

- a) **Septic tank pump-out program implementation:** This type of project can be implemented within a county, regional or watershed-based area, such as impaired watershed. These projects must target low to moderate income septic system owners. The projects should initiate a mechanism to track septic system maintenance, an approach for notifying septic owners of the need to pump systems out, and development and distribution of educational materials. Septic Tank Pump out (RB-1) specifications outlined in the above DEQ guidelines should be followed.
- b) **Sewerage system connections:** Connecting to a public sewer system (RB-2) may be a cost effective and efficient mechanism to address failing onsite systems. Funding must follow the specification listed in the above references guidelines. Sewer line extension projects are eligible but must include justification such as percentage of failing systems to be connected.
- c) **Septic system replacement and repair projects:** Projects addressing straight pipes and failing or failed residential septic systems by implementing BMP's outlined in the above references DEQ guidelines (RB-3, 4, 4P and 5) will be considered for funding. Priority residential septic practices for WQIF funding include system repair and installation. Construction of cluster wastewater system using alternative decentralized treatment technologies or other innovative systems serving multiple houses will also be considered for funding.

Category 3 - Other Project Areas This category of projects can include a range of actions that address riparian buffer restoration or NPS concerns involving other NPS source areas, e.g. urban nutrient management or mine land reclamation. Target Pollutant: Pounds of Total Phosphorous or Nitrogen removed or Tons of Sediment addressed.

- a) **Vegetated Riparian Buffers:** Establishment of vegetated riparian stream buffers, such as through incentives to landowners, along non- in areas not otherwise addressed by the Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program (CREP) eligible. *NPS results – estimate size of buffer area, linear feet of stream, depth of buffer, acres of buffer established, number of trees planted, affected drainage area.*
- b) **Abandoned or orphaned mine land reclamation:** Projects to improve water quality through the reclamation of past coal and mineral mining operations. Water quality impairments from past mining operations addressed through the removal of exposed refuse materials such as gob piles and tipple sites, stabilization of barren and eroding out slopes, and other reclamation activities are eligible. DEQ's preference is for projects addressing multiple sites or to a single site causing substantial water quality degradation in impaired stream segment(s). *NPS results – estimate size of BMP reclamation area, nature of the reclamation activity.*
- c) **Urban Nutrient management (UNM) planning and implementation:** A proposed program may address UNM on parks, athletic fields, office parks, apartment and condominium complexes, golf courses, and/or other urban landscaped areas. Projects should include an agreement with the land/turf manager to ensure that they follow site-specific fertilizer and lime recommendations and keep fertilization records. Audits of fertilization records may be conducted at the request of

the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to assure implementation. State owned lands are excluded from participation. Proposals must meet minimum UNM programs standards. This information can be found at the DCR website: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/nutmgmt.shtml *NPS results – provide estimated number of sites, type of turf, and acres to be covered by urban NM plans, and estimated NPS reductions.*

E. ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Activities that are not eligible and that will not be supported with WQIF funding include:

- On-going staff to implement local programs that are required by law.
- Projects to be completed in order to satisfy an enforcement action.
- Dumpsite cleanups.
- Agriculturally related activities or BMP's are not eligible for funding unless stated otherwise. Substantial WQIF funding for Virginia's Agricultural BMP Cost-Share program is made available under a separate program administered by DCR.
- Funding of mini-grant programs or school-specific education projects will not be considered.
- GIS and database development will not be funded except if they are a part of a larger project. For example, a small amount of grant funding for costs associated with development or maintenance of a database that is directly related to eligible activities will be considered (i.e. database for establishing septic pump-out maintenance program, database for riparian buffer project, etc.).
- Funding cannot be used for agency operating expenses or for purposes of replacing or otherwise reducing any general, non-general, or special funds allocated or appropriated to any state agency.

F. AVAILABLE FUNDING & MATCH REQUIREMENT

A total of \$2.5 million in funding is available for distribution statewide for WQIF nonpoint source water quality improvement grants. DEQ may reduce grant eligibility, and/or the scope and size of a project to ensure the greatest financial and environmental benefit to as many communities as possible.

- **Award Range:** The award range for WQIF funding available through this RFA is \$150,000 (minimum) and \$750,000 (maximum).
- **Match:** Projects are required to have a 50% match of the total project cost. However, projects within local governments that have been identified by the [Commission on Local Government](#) as having high fiscal stress may request a reduced match amount. In those jurisdictions, a lower match may be allowable provided that the match is at least 25% of the total project cost. Match can include in-kind or direct contributions (at least 1:1 match).
- **Personnel/Staff/Travel/Supply Costs:** The level of essential staff and administrative funding may not exceed 25% of the total WQIF grant funds requested. Staffing is defined as all costs related to both personnel (salaries and/or wages) and fringe benefits as well as expenses related to travel and supplies.
- **Design Costs:** If implementation projects require designs as part of the proposal, they may request grant funds to cover related activities. Proposals requesting funds for design costs only will not be funded. DEQ limits the amount of grant funds available to design activities. Design, consulting and permitting fees are limited to 25% of construction costs (not to exceed \$40,000 and not including match). Please Note: Projects that are reimbursed for design costs that cancel

or close before the design is implemented are subject to the enforcement clause of the standard agreement that requires repayment.

- **Time Frame:** The earliest WQIF funding may be made available for a project is July 1, 2016; which is the target date for executing WQIF project agreements. All proposals must provide for expenditure of funds within a defined project period ending by June 30, 2018 or within 2 years of the grant agreement starting date
- **Indirect Costs:** A maximum of 10% of funds can be requested for Indirect Costs for applicants with a federally approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. Indirect funds can be used towards the applicants match if the applicant has a federally approved indirect rate that is higher than 10%; but documentation of this will be required. If indirect funds are requested or provided as match, the applicant must include documentation of a federally approved indirect rate with their application (including a signed copy of the agreement).

G. GRANT AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

DEQ will make use of a standard grant agreement and general terms and conditions of the Commonwealth for all Water Quality Improvement Fund projects awarded funding through this request for proposals. Projects selected for funding will be required to provide quarterly progress reports including a final report to the assigned DEQ Project Manager.

All successful proposals that provide grant funding (including match) for the installation of BMPs will be expected to address operation and maintenance requirements related to these BMPs. This includes the requirement of developing operation and maintenance plans and associated landowner agreements.

H. APPLICATION PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS

As specified below, the application package for the 2015 WQIF RFA includes several required components as well as optional components. All required elements must be submitted in order for the proposal to be considered for review. Optional submission elements may enhance the application package but ultimately decisions will be based upon the required submission elements.

APPLICATION PACKAGE DOCUMENTS				
All elements must be in an electronic format (PDF, Microsoft Word, excel)				
REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS				
Project Proposal Narrative (maximum length is 10 pages, 1 inch margins, 12 point font) (Attachment I-Narrative Guidelines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
2015-16 DEQ WQIF NPS Application Form (word) (WQIF-NPS RFA Attachment II - Application Form)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
DEQ 2015 NPS WQIF Attachment 3 template (Excel) (WQIF NPS RFA Attachment III) – must be submitted in Excel form	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Match Documentation: (1 PDF/word document containing all letters of support which document required match)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Vicinity Map: 8 ½ x 11 inch. (limited to 1 page)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Project Site Map: 8 ½ x 11 inch (limited to 1 page)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
OPTIONAL APPLICATION DOCUMENTS				

Letters of Support for non-match partners (limited to 1 combined PDF or Word document)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Photos (limited to 2 pages, PDF or word)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Description of previous accomplishments (limited to 1 page, PDF or Word): Description of other successful and related projects for which your organization has been the lead.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Please do not provide any additional information not indicated above. Other information will not be considered.				

NOTE: DEQ staff will work with successful applicants to ensure that final scopes of work address issues that arise during the proposal review process.

I. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

In order to be considered for selection for WQIF RFA, applicants are required to submit (via E-mail) an electronic version (Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat PDF files are preferred) of the completed 2015 WQIF RFA package to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality by February 16, 2016. Incomplete pre-applications and those that are not delivered or mailed as specified above will be disqualified. Email application packages to: npsgrants@deq.virginia.gov

Please use the email subject line: 2015 WQIF RFA

J. EVALUATION AND AWARD CRITERIA

Projects will be scored and selected for funding based on the evaluation criteria listed below. A team of DEQ staff will evaluate grant applications and proposed projects. Final decisions for project selection are the discretion of the DEQ Director. All projects approved for funding through this RFA will be made available for public comment at least 30-days prior to executing grant agreements. The recommended award list will be posted for public comment on the DEQ NPS Funding web site:

<http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance/NonpointSourceFunding.aspx>

Basic Eligibility (Pre-Screening) Criteria—The following evaluation criteria apply to all proposals. All of these criteria must be met in order for a full review to be completed.	Yes or No
• The project provides at least a 1:1 match (for every dollar of grant funds requested, one dollar of match is provided unless the applicant seeks a lower match rate and is classified as having high fiscal stress by the Commission on Local Government).	
• The applicant is listed as one of the eligible participants listed in Section B (page 1).	
• The project does not include any of the non-eligible activities outlined in Section E (page 4)	
• The project proposal meets all submission requirements and restrictions (Deadline, forms, etc.)	
• The project results in NPS pollution reduction and provides information required to calculate reductions.	
Project Eligibility	

Evaluation Criteria –The following evaluation criteria apply to all proposals.	Maximum points
<u>Reductions:</u> Will the project implement nonpoint source pollution control actions that achieve measurable results such as reduction of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, bacteria or other pollutants? Projects will be ranked against other projects within each project category and targeted pollutant. Pollution reduction estimates will be based on information provided by applicants.	20 points
<u>Cost Effectiveness:</u> How cost-effective is the project in achieving measurable results - reductions of nonpoint source pollution? Projects will be ranked within category based on a ratio of technical assistance cost to BMP (pollution reduction control) cost.	15 points
<u>Technical Team:</u> Does the proposal demonstrate that the project will engage appropriate technical expertise and assistance throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure project activities are technically sound and feasible? The proposal should demonstrate the capability of the project sponsor and partners in providing for the successful completion of the project (e.g. qualifications, expertise, and role within the community). If an appropriate local partnership does not already exist, projects should include a strategy to identify and engage essential partners.	15 points
<u>Project Planning:</u> Does the overall project design support proposed nonpoint source project objectives? These design elements should include specific plans or methodologies to be used to achieve the project objectives.	10 points
<u>Project Experience:</u> Does the applicant clearly demonstrate the experience and capacity to manage and administer grant projects? Previous project and grant management experience should be identified.	10 points
<u>Addressing Priority Resource Needs</u> Does the project support restoration of a watershed or sub-watershed that fails to meet water quality standards or is the project located in a watershed containing critical habitat, drinking water sources, or other priority waters?	10 points
<u>Timeline:</u> How well does the timeline and milestones convey that the project will be completed successfully? The timeline should address the need for any permits, authorizations or approvals.	5 points
<u>Establishes a Local Program:</u> Does the project establish a local program for long-term nonpoint source pollution reductions?	5 points
<u>Implements a Plan:</u> To what extent does the project target implementation of a watershed based plan with stated pollution reduction goals or other watershed based priority restoration/protection activities?	5 points
<u>Project-specific Match:</u> Is the match appropriate and in line with the nature and content of the project proposal? Activity covered by the match should be associated with the content of the proposal. The degree to which the project leverages other funding and supports associated projects or programs should be identified.	5 points
Evaluation Criteria Maximum Points	100 points

K. DEQ CONTACTS

Questions regarding this request for applications, NPS implementation and project development should be directed to npsgrants@deg.virginia.gov. Subject line: NPS WQIF RFA Question

L. REFERENCES

To assist in the development of proposals for this solicitation, resources related to grant proposal development and grant project management are provided.
http://deg.virginia.gov/Portals/0/DEQ/Water/NonpointSource/NPS_Grants_Resources.pdf

M. ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT I - [2015 WQIF PROPOSAL NARRATIVE GUIDELINES](#) I
ATTACHMENT II - [2015 WQIF Application](#) II
ATTACHMENT III – [Budget Detail, BMP Summary, Project Timeline](#)III